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Year Five: Evolution of a Journal

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Year Five: Evolution of a Journal

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Dear Reader,

Thank you for your interest in Eukaryon. While you may not be an ecologist, a neuroscientist, or even a geneticist, opening this journal shows your fascination of the living world around us. That is the main point of biology: observing something in nature that grabs your attention and posing questions to learn more about the phenomenon.

2009 marks a landmark year in Biology. Not only is Eukaryon publishing the fifth volume, but it is also the 150th anniversary of the publication of Darwin's most famous book, "On the Origin of Species by Means of Natural Selection." Charles Darwin took the same notion of observing a phenomenon in nature, posing questions, and looking for answers. During his trip to the Galapagos Islands, he observed the differences in beak shape of different Finch species. This produced his theories on natural selection and evolution of a species over time.

Since the publication of the first volume in 2005, Eukaryon has grown and evolved in its own ways. Each year, the editorial board has accepted more and more students to meet the growing number of submissions. We had 21 members who read through 53 submissions, and we still kept our acceptance rate at just under 50%. This is in sharp contrast to the first year, where there were only 2 members who accepted all 18 submitted articles! In addition, our large editorial board brings diversity to Eukaryon. A few members are not even majoring in biology, but instead are focusing on chemistry, psychology, or are double majoring in two subjects. The fascination with the natural world is easily found in our diverse editorial board.

The print version of our journal is vitally important to our success as a student organization. This is what people can tangibly hold and analyze. Our third volume was the first time we went to an external print shop, and the result was extreme. Our journal resembled that of *Cell* or *Science* in appearance, and students, faculty, and even Lake Forest College officials were energized to hold it. However, each journal cost a substantial amount, so we were only able to print about 35 copies. Luckily, the school began to realize the positive impact of Eukaryon on the Lake Forest college community, and we were able to increase our funding for the following year. In 2008, we ordered 100 copies of volume 4, and students received a free copy of Eukaryon for the first time!

With the culmination of volume 4, the Lake Forest College officials realized the depth Eukaryon reaches. Dean Tyler, the Dean of Students, worked tirelessly to ensure that part of our funding would come from the Dean of Faculty's office. The reasoning is that Eukaryon is a student organization whose focus is on the academics of the school. This further emphasizes the strength of Lake Forest College and could be used as a recruitment tool for prospective students. Since Eukaryon benefits both the students and the school, part of our available funding should come from the Student Activity Fee, as well as through administrative money. This will ensure money for the future volumes of Eukaryon, allowing us to keep producing a high-quality journal.

The publication of our first volume was like the birth of a new species. Over the years, selective pressures (such as article selection and printing costs) have made us change our methods of publication. These changes over the years were inevitable. If we were unable to change, our ineffective ways would cause a lack of interest and Eukaryon would eventually "die out," in a similar manner to that of natural selection, which only selects the best-suited species for the type of environment. In honor of these similarities, and to celebrate Darwin's work, we have decided to create our theme around evolution. The cover, designed by Emily Pospiech '09, depicts the Galapagos Islands and a Galapagos finch, major subjects involved for Darwin's discovery. The finch is carrying a DNA strand, emphasizing that evolution not only occurs on the species level, but also on the molecular level.

I am extremely proud of everyone involved in Eukaryon as they have worked tirelessly to enhance our journal. A major thank you goes to Dr. Pliny Smith for his wise advice and support throughout the course of the year. To all the editorial board members, you deserve more than just a 'thank you.' You are the ones who make Eukaryon what it is. Thank you to the Review Board and the Chair, Stephanie Levin, for their hard work accepting only the best articles. Reading through that many articles is not easy! Thank you to the Copy-Editing Board for flying through the accepted articles and correcting any errors, and to the Chair Liza Pahomov for keeping on top of it all. To all the members of the Publication Board and the Chair, Ejaz Ali, thank you for your tremendous amount of work you have put in these last few weeks. Your patience and persistence definitely shows! Finally, thank you to all the Biology professors who submitted articles on the students' behalf. We would not have a journal if it were not for your participation!

Eukaryon has evolved tremendously in the past five years. The editorial board size has increased, the acceptance rate has reached a competitive level, and part of our funding has been guaranteed for next year. As Darwin suggests, only the fit survive. By reaching five years of publication, Eukaryon has certainly survived, and will only continue to grow and develop into something extraordinary in the years to come.

Sincerely,

Shaun Davis
Editor-in-Chief '08-'09

